The total number of passport applications pending at the Passport Office at Bhopal as on 29.5.1998 was 4223. This figure is not abnormal in relation to the prescribed time for processing a passport application. If all documents are in order, the Passport Office at Bhopal issues a passport within a period of 35 days. In cases where delay is likely to occur because of incomplete documentation or lack of clear police verification reports the Passport Office at Bhopal makes efforts to expedite processing of these applications by issuing letters to the individual applicants for completion of documents, and intervening with the police authorities to expedite definite reports. Where a police verification report is not received within a month of requesting the same, the application is processed and passport issued without waiting for the police report.

LPG Waiting List in Gujarat

*224. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of the registrants for LPG connections in Gujarat who registered themselves prior to 1st January, 1991, but are yet to be provided with LPG connections, district-wise; and

(b) by when Government propose to clear the backlog of the LPG waiting list in Gujarat?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI K. RAMAMURTY): (a) The waiting list for new LPG connections registered prior to 1.1.1991 all over the country including Gujarat to all desirous registrants has been cleared by the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies during 1997-98 as per the directive of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas as part of the enrolment plan for 1997-98. The waiting list in Gujarat as on 1.4.1998 is 6.84 lakhs.

(b) Release of new connections for clearing of waiting list depends inter-alia upon product availability, slack available with the existing distributors, minimum required allocation to newly commissioned distributors and unviable distributors, etc. With the expected higher availability of LPG through domestic production and import, large number of connections are planned to be released in future and it is expected to clear the entire waiting list throughout the country, including Gujarat by the year 2001-02.

Participation of West Bengal in Negotiations with Bangladesh

*225. SHRI JOYANTA ROY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to invlove the Government of West Bengal in various stages of their negotiations with the Government of Bengladesh on matters pertaining to irrigation, economic and border management and similar other issues; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) and (b) Government of India have involved the Government of West Bengal at various stages in the negotiation of several matters with the Government of Bangladesh. Representatives of the Government of West Bengal have participated in the negotiations with Bangladesh regarding Ganga water sharing in the meetings of the Joint Rivers Commission, in the talks regarding the Teesta as well as in the discussions on a Motor Vehicles Agreement.